1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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FIG. 70. A *tim bager*

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FIG. 71. 'The soothsayer then began to rattle'

[facing p. 355]

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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jesting altercation about their mythologically founded bonds of mutual coercion. Ta'aŋ, the Gbizug tendaana's brother, who often deputizes for him in public ceremonies, has a sharp tongue. When representatives of the tendaana and of the Chief of Tongo have to perform some ceremony together he always pretends to mock the Namoos. 'You are only guests here,' he jeers (referring to their immigrant origin), 'I (as representative of Gbizug) have given you land to sit on, but if you don't behave I'll drive you back to Mampurugu, where you came from.' The Tongo men laugh good-humouredly at this sally, and one of them might answer, 'Very true, but if we should decide to go back to Mampurugu and leave you to yourselves, you will just starve'—the reference being to the Chief of Tongo's ritual power over the rain. Elders of Kpata'ar and Gundaat, which have a similar politico-ritual relationship to that of Tongo and Gbizug, often tease one another in the same way when they meet to perform a ceremony together.

Tallensi say this is just fun, jesting (*koohəg*); but we see again that this apparently spontaneous jesting acts as a means of reconciling and counteracting the tensions of a double-edged social relationship. Where two corporate groups are structurally divided from each other to the point of having potentially competitive interests likely to lead to conflict at one level of the social organization, but are at the same time bound to each other by strong ties of obligatory co-operation and goodwill in another aspect of their social relations, the undercurrent of hostility or mutual wariness is deflected by a jest. You jest with people who must be friendly to you in terms of one set of loyalties and may be hostile to you in terms of another, and with whom you are on an equal footing as far as mutual rights and duties go. In the social relations of individuals with one another, this configuration occurs between siblings-in-law; hence the notion that the joking relationship between corporate units is modelled on *dakiirət*, the relationship of siblings-in-law.

Privileged Moral Coercion

There is another peculiar tie belonging to the category of social relations which we have been discussing. So far as my information goes, it is also confined to the Talis and their congeners. Its moral aspect is of particular interest as a clue to the values that lie at the back of the basic principles of Talis social structure.

The natives have no name for this relationship. In virtue of it, pairs of clans or lineages usually on the margin of the field of clanship of each, but not joking partners, have the privilege of moral coercion over each other's members. The natives describe this as a taboo (*kihər*). No member of one group may refuse a request of any member of the other. 'They *dare not* refuse', one informant declared, with obvious solemnity, as if to emphasize that it was a question of deep moral values. 'If they don't give what we ask, they would die, their house (i.e. lineage) would fall to pieces (*ba yiri gbi'irme*).' In other words, if anyone violates this bond, not only he but his entire line of descent would perish—the most calamitous retribution conceivable to the natives and one which befalls only those who transgress the ultimate tenets of religion and ethics.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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his ritual powers and duties give a tendaana very great prestige and considerable moral authority over people living on his *teŋ* whether or not they belong to his clan. At Tongo, for instance, the Gbizug tendaana is spoken of and treated with a respect little short of reverence, both in the formal interclan politico-ritual relations and in commonplace relations of everyday life. 'He owns the land (*ɔn nso teŋ la*)', Tongo people say gravely, 'we are strangers here. We only grow our millet here to feed ourselves. If we offend the tendaana he can drive us away from here.' The last part of this statement is not literally true. A tendaana cannot drive people off their ancestral dwelling and farm-land; to say the least it would be ethically evil. It is not legal but ritual action that the statement implies. I have seen a tendaana's curse throw a person into a state of anxiety that persisted for days, until a reconciliation was effected. But this was anxiety concerning the mystical consequences of the tendaana's curse, without any assumption as to its jural implications. The term 'owner' applied to a chief or tendaana, as we have stated earlier, is simply a means of subsuming in one concept the configuration of rights and duties, privileges and obligations which defines the relations of a community with its politico-ritual heads in reference to its local framework and to the common values symbolized in ritual doctrine and practice. The material earth and the mystical Earth meet in the functions of tendaanas.

Many Tallensi are able to formulate the distinction between the earth in its physical, utilitarian aspect and the Earth in its ritual manifestations. But in general the distinction is inherent in the economic and politico-ritual institutions of the natives rather than expfessed in explicit doctrine or language. Whenever or wherever the concept *teŋ* comes up it tends to be ambiguous. It suggests both aspects of the earth, though the major emphasis may be on one or the other. It is as if neither aspect of the earth can appear without the other following like its shadow.

This holds particularly with the *tendaanditib* clans. Their ritual bonds with their *tɛs* form a halo around their utilitarian relations with the earth. In most of these clans, therefore, it is a taboo of the Earth to sell parcels of land. To sell farm-land (*kuo*) is like selling pieces of the mystical *teŋ* to which they are bound by the strongest ties of interest, emotion, and values. Namoo clans which do not have tendaanas do not feel this strong and direct tie with their *teŋ* in its mystical aspect. The utilitarian, material aspect of the earth falls apart from its mystical counterpart more easily for them. Hence it is mostly in such communities that farm-land is sold. But even Namoos say that the earth as such, the *teŋ*, cannot be sold. In practice the sale of farm-land is a sale of usufructuary rights and is confined to clansmen or kinsmen as we know. It is, always, a transaction between men who are bound to one another by the fundamental common and mutual interests of Tale collective life. Men cannot buy land in a Tale settlement in which they have no kin. In this, as in other aspects of their relationship towards locality, the Namoos put the major emphasis on the coherence of the community as this is focused in the chiefship. And fundamentally the coherence of the community is as indivisible as the continuity of territory. The Chief of Tongo, for example, exercises an ever-present influence on the prosperity and welfare of the members

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of the clan. They regularly attend sacrifices and ceremonies at Gbizug as their forefathers did, and continue to perform the duties and accept the privileges of close *sunzɔp* of Gbizug. But they are uneasy, the more so as the Gbizug tendaana never loses an opportunity of haranguing them, at ceremonies, about the disgraceful conduct of their tendaana. For a short while the inescapable demands of ritual collaboration brought the two tendaanas together again, when the Gbeog tendaana had to perform the principal rites at the installation of the new Gbizug tendaana. But soon afterwards their dispute revived again. It is, as elders of related clans declared, an insoluble dispute. Both tendaanas are right, they say. The Gbizug tendaana is going by 'what used to be (*den daa a siem*)', the Gbeog tendaana by 'what is now (*den a siem zinala*)'. It is a problem of adjusting the equilibrium of the clan to changes in the segmentary relationship of its component lineages. One day, it is said, there will be a Gbizug tendaana who will accept the present position. Then the two tendaanas will become reconciled and the quarrel will cease.

As this story shows, intra-clan conflicts dislocate the routine of co-operation and reciprocity and lead to anomalies in customary modes of conduct. Yinyela's refusal to co-operate in the affairs of Tɔŋ-Puhug led to many embarrassing situations; as when two men who were not members of Yinyela's segment came to assist his (classificatory) grandson with his house-building, in accordance with normal custom, and were publicly rebuked for this by the head of their family. Dislocation of the normal scheme of ritual and ceremonial co-operation in the ancestor cult and in public ceremonies such as funerals is particularly disturbing. It serves to focus attention on the interpretation of actions that damage lineage solidarity as offences against the ancestors. Public opinion, the point of view of the majority, which always favours the greater solidarity as the source of stability and normality in corporate relations, becomes critical. In due time one of the opponents of the dispute dies; and according to custom the mystical cause of his death is sought by divination. The technique and social setting of the divining session make it a reflection of public sentiment. The diviner brings the simmering conflict in the lineage into the open and relates the death to it. His verdict, coming ostensibly from the ancestors, concludes with commands from them to put the situation right by means of sacrifices and a ritual reconciliation. This is the commonest way in which the ancestor cult emerges as a sanction of reintegration in the lineage or clan. But it presupposes the existence of ritual ties and common ritual obligations among lineage and clan kin; and it comes as the culmination of a social reaction to the anomalies arising from intra-clan conflicts.

We have space only for one illustrative case history. Many years ago Gbalɔg of Tɔŋ-Puhug insulted the then Chief of Tongo. The chief pronounced a curse on him; and rather than apologize Gbalɔg went to settle in one of the peripheral settlements taking his younger sons with him. His oldest son, Naŋgbeog, dissociating himself from his father, stayed behind at Tongo. Years passed. There was a new Chief of Tongo. Yet Gbalɔg remained unrepentant. In 1937 he died, a very old man, boasting that after all he had got the better of the chiefs of Tongo. But the diviner revealed that the ancestors had caused him to die because of

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581 583 [586] the bridegroom's guardian must send the placation gift (*lu sendaan*) to the bride's guardian, and must pay a proportion of the bride-price acceptable to the latter. A wife is usually espoused (*sol*) by paying the bride-price of four head of cattle or their equivalent in instalments over a number of years. If he does not fulfil these jural requirements, a man has no rights to and over his wife. On the other hand, women frequently desert husbands who have paid a part or, occasionally, even the whole bride-price. In such a case an honourable man may feel bound to compel his daughter to return to her husband, but if the girl refuses obstinately he may have to yield to her. Often, however, a father prefers his daughter to find another husband from whom he claims the bride-price that has to be refunded to the first husband. And it is not uncommon for men to instigate a daughter to leave her lawful husband for another man, or to take a daughter away from her husband and give her to another man as a means of raising what we should call ready cash or its equivalent—for instance, a cow to repay a pressing debt, or to buy grain for the household. Thus, observance of the jural proprieties gives a husband a weapon with which he can try to assert his rights to and over his wife. It does not give him an absolute guarantee of these rights nor does it ensure the stability of the marriage.

582 593 A girl's parents, and especially her father, can make or mar a marriage. Young people may wed without their fathers' consent, but they cannot remain legitimately married without it. If a man objects to a son-in-law he usually succeeds in exercising his right to take his daughter away, though cases are numerous in which the woman has persistently returned to the rejected husband, who has had to be accepted in the end. By contrast, if a father has himself chosen or likes his daughter's husband, he is a strong ally. He can force the girl, beating her if necessary, to stay with her husband, though here again fathers have been known to fail with obdurate daughters. Generally, however, the strength of [589] paternal authority makes a father's command irresistible; for he might curse an intractable daughter, and this is greatly dreaded.

583 691 Again, a woman will not stay with a husband who does not pay at least a portion of the bride-price. It is an insult to her, placing her on the level of a casual lover and exposing her to the taunts of her co-wives of the lineage. Pukiehət's wife was taken from him five times because he could not pay anything towards her bride-price; every time she came back. At length her guardian brought a case against Pukiehət. The chief put it to her that Pukiehət was, in effect, treating both her and her guardian with contempt. Sadly she admitted this and agreed to leave him if he did not meet the debt at once. Pukiehət saw he was in danger of losing his wife. He was a poor man; but he set to work energetically and managed to raise the equivalent of two cows, which was enough to satisfy his father-in-law.

586 Even a fruitful marriage, the strongest of all bonds between husband

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be a grievous sin against her parents and her ancestors, sure to bring misfortune on her and her children.

I was the unsuspecting witness of the strength of a woman's filial devotion, brought out by the crisis of death, at Sawɔŋba's burial ceremony. Sawɔŋba's daughter married a Tenzugu man against her father's wish. To add insult to injury, when Sawɔŋba sent messengers to demand a cow of the bride-price, his son-in-law turned them away with contempt. As the girl refused to leave her husband, Sawɔŋba cursed her, and, being a leper who knew he had not long to live, expressly forbade her to come to his funeral. She was not told of his death, but heard of it indirectly. On the day of the burial, during one of the major rites, there was a sudden commotion in the crowd around the gateway. A young woman dashed forward, making for the homestead. I could see the strained and agitated look on her face as she passed me. But at once one of Sawɔŋba's classificatory sons darted forward, seized her, and dragged her back to the tree where the elders sat. For a minute or two nothing but a wildly shouting mob could be seen under the tree. Then the girl struggled out, sobbing aloud, her body covered with bruises where she had been beaten by her enraged brothers and clansmen. Followed by execrations, she was escorted by one of the elders to where her husband and a party of his lineage kin were waiting. Only the fear of bloodshed, which would make the affair into that much-dreaded thing, a 'case for the white man (*nasaara yɛl*)', had restrained them from interfering. Sawɔŋba's sons and lineage kin did not see the pathos of their sister's action. They were thoroughly incensed, and called it an insult. Had her husband wished to behave properly, he would have sent an elder of his lineage to beg Sawɔŋba's pardon while he was still alive, or, at any rate, to beg the head of Sawɔŋba's medial lineage to intercede with his sons when he heard of Sawɔŋba's death.

These bonds of a woman with her parental family play an important part in Tale domestic economy. After the harvest there is always a great coming and going of daughters to and from their parental homes. And no man would let his daughter or sister depart, at this time, without a gift of a well-filled basket of grain. This is one way in which a woman builds up her own private resources out of which she provides little luxuries, utensils, and clothes for herself and by means of which she often tides the family over a lean period. This is a privilege, but it has almost the force of a right. Occasionally an elderly woman without a son, or, as sometimes happens nowadays, with her only son away for long in Ashanti or the Colony, is left without proper support in her husband's home. She can then go back to her father's home and is entitled to her sustenance as of right. The services a woman's husband renders to her father, now and then, in the early years of marriage, the interest she has in her brother's children, the importance attached to

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593 kinship ties with the mother's brother and his lineage, are all evidence of the imperishability of a woman's ties with her parental family.

613 Last but not least, a woman continues all her life to be under the care of her patrilineal ancestors. She must observe their totemic taboos. One 769 of them is her spirit guardian (*seyər*), to whom her husband will have to send animals on her behalf as sacrifices on critical occasions such as her first confinement, and from whose tutelage she must be ritually released on death. Whenever an important sacrifice to these ancestors takes place in her paternal home she is told, and has the right to participate and to receive a definite share of the sacrificial meat. She has duties to these lineage ancestors too. Thus whenever a shrine of a lineage founder passes to a new lineage head, a daughter of the lineage is [777] selected by divination to fetch it to its new home. Her good or ill fortune as wife and mother depends very much on that occult arbiter of life which the Tallensi conceive of as a personal Predestined Fate (*Nuor Yin*); and this is associated with one's patrilineal ancestors. [761 If a woman's children die one after another she is being dogged by an ●789] evil Predestiny; and only her paternal kin can perform the ritual of exorcising it. Finally, when she dies, though she is buried by her husband's lineage according to their rites, and her spirit is aggregated to those of their ancestors, since it is her sons who will sacrifice to and worship her spirit, her paternal kin also perform a short and symbolic funeral ceremony for her. Thus she is 'brought home (*mar kul*)' to be received amongst her paternal ancestors, and the cycle of her life is completed.

The Opposition between the Kinship Ties and the Marital Ties of Spouses, and its Resolution

602 All her life a woman is subject to the pull of her patrilateral kinship ties. As a wife, however, she must submit more and more to the con- 593 trary pull of her marital ties. Her husband is even more strongly ruled by his ties with his natal family and patrilineal kin. Many of the chances and changes of marriage come down to the question of how the partners adjust themselves to the opposing loyalties and interests associated with their divergent kinship ties. A marriage reaches stability when the partners achieve common interests and mutual bonds strong enough to hold them together in the face of their respective patrilateral kinship ties. That is why the birth of children plays such a vital part in stabilizing a marriage.

602 Marriage, then, is in one aspect a unique relationship between one man and one woman; in this context, peculiarities of personality influence the fate of a particular marriage. In another aspect, or more accurately, perhaps, at the other end of the scale of marriage relations, it is a union between a man and a woman who represent and remain

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dies childless, and that children are the greatest source of joy and pride, comfort and support that anybody can have. The Tallensi are much like ourselves in this matter and do not think there is any inconsistency between these two aspects of parenthood. Their whole philosophy of life is like that. Realists as they are, they take it for granted that life has many risks and troubles, but, as they often put it, 'Does anybody desire death on that account?' When I told them that Europeans often refrain deliberately from having children, they were either sceptical or appalled. 593

The Parent–Child Bond as an Absolute Bond

Tallensi say that the bonds between parent and child can never be obliterated and may not be repudiated. This is a fundamental moral principle and it goes back to the notion that bearing or begetting children is hard. From it follows the duty of filial piety.

You cannot disown your child. 'Even if your child is a good-for-nothing, you have no alternative but to keep him,' said Lɔyani, one of the most intelligent and upright men I knew. 'Have you not suffered to beget him?' he went on. 'How can you reject him? You are always thinking of your children's good, though they are often selfish and think only of their own advantage. Your child may be lazy or ill-behaved. But yet you cannot drive him away, you cannot harass him so that he quits you.'

Many examples could be quoted to illustrate the strength of this ideal. I sacked one of my servants for petty theft. A day or two later an elder who was known to be one of my friends came to intercede for him. He admitted that the man was a thief, but he was very disappointed when I declined to take him back. 'You are his father,' he said, 'and you ought to take him back.' Then, after a short silence, he added gravely, 'You white men! You are not like us. You do not understand the meaning of "to beg forgiveness".' 593 685

A better instance is an incident in which Lɔyani himself was concerned some days after he made the comment quoted above. A youth of Lɔyani's clan stole a fowl owned by another member of his own joint family, whom he called his older brother (*bier*). The theft, a despicable thing in any case, was made blacker by the youth's attempt to conceal it; and when it was discovered, the whole clan was agog with it. The culprit's father, in his shame and anger at the disgrace brought upon his family, struck and cursed him saying that he must never again set foot in the house. Thereupon the young man took refuge with Lɔyani, whose son was his friend. Lɔyani himself, like all respectable people, was shocked at the theft. 'Heaven save me from theft,' he said, when he told me the story. 'Death were better than that. It is shameful.' And he went on to describe how everybody scorns and derides a thief. Nevertheless, as soon as the boy arrived Lɔyani went to the elders of the boy's lineage to get them to intercede with the father to withdraw his [577] [799]

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of his dead mother's spirit; she is not tied to the lineage home in the same way as a father's spirit is and can be 'given water' more easily wherever the man happens to be. Nevertheless, his welfare and that of his dependants rests as much on his maintaining good relations with her spirit as with his father's spirit.

Filial piety among the Tallensi is a great deal more than a customary injunction to honour and respect one's parents. Psychologically it is a very complex sentiment. Even during their lifetime parents have quasi-mystical attributes, as we shall see more clearly when we consider the relations of parents and first-born children, and these dominate the sentiment. A parent can bless or curse a child. A parent's curse, in particular, is greatly dreaded, as we have previously noted, and, in consequence, only resorted to in case of gross affront or unforgivable defiance on the part of a child. If a parent expresses or merely feels resentment against a child, that is equivalent to a curse which may cause it illness or other harm. Thus one element in the sentiment of filial piety is respect for the blessing and fear of the curse of a parent. That is why, men say, it is sometimes embarrassing to have an old mother in one's house, though one is bound to keep her, both in duty and out of affection. For old women become completely egoistic. All they think of is having enough to eat and being comfortable, and if they are crossed they are apt to curse anybody incontinently.

In a large joint family one often finds a young man with a growing family of his own torn between his devotion to his father and his desire to be economically independent so as to provide for his wife and children more satisfactorily. He cannot go out to farm on his own without his father's blessing and consent else his venture will surely fail. He begins to drop hints or makes a tentative approach to his father. But if the latter shows displeasure he retreats at once. I have seen this happen more than once. When Tɔyalbɛrɔgu wanted to go out to farm on his own, his father Naabdiya reproached him, saying that *he* had not deserted *his* father as Tɔyalbɛrɔgu now wished to desert *him*. Tɔyalbɛrɔgu apologized and withdrew. But, as Naabdiya told me, 'I still had resentment in my heart and he still secretly cherished his plan'. A couple of weeks later Tɔyalbɛrɔgu developed a large boil in the armpit. In panic he begged an elder to ask Naabdiya to forgive him and formally withdraw his implicit curse, which, he was certain, was the cause of the boil. It was the same with Yinyɛla's son Duun. Though as an eldest son he felt entitled to start farming on his own, he dared not ask that hard old man's permission for fear that it might arouse his resentment.

It is an interesting point that when a young man who has been living and farming with his dead father's brother, for example, sets up in his own homestead, the pretext for the separation is often not an economic one. It is commonly recognized that the young man moves out because he needs more land and freedom to provide for his family by himself.

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me in her mother's room'. The other categories are blurred; any adult of the domestic group is described as a 'mother' or 'father'.

During these first three or four years a child's father, though he sees less of it than its mother does, is as loving and indulgent a parent. A baby can do no wrong; for, as Tallensi say, 'it has no sense (*u ka yam*)'. I have seen an infant screaming in a tantrum or nagging tiresomely at its mother while she was too busy with a household task, such as cooking, to attend to it, and its father come in and carry it off to soothe it. What discipline or frustration of impulse a child encounters in this period comes mainly from its mother or a young nursemaid. For example until it can drink by itself, an infant is regularly given a drink (*yuh*, causative from *yu*, to drink), at least once daily, usually when it is bathed. This is an item of hygiene with a quasi-magical stamp. The fluid may be plain water, unboiled or previously boiled and cooled down; or it may be a decoction of roots (*ŋaɟa*), the generic term for any vegetable products used in Tale leechcraft and medicine. Its composition is prescribed by the child's spirit guardian (*sɛɟər*). After its bath the mother lays the child on her lap facing sideways, holds her cupped hand to its mouth, and pours the drink from a small calabash into the babe's mouth. It splutters and chokes, kicks and screams with rage, but the liquid is poured down its throat relentlessly.

Until they can run about by themselves Tale children are not expected to be house-clean. By the age of 3, however, most of them have learnt to run outside to defecate during the day and to ask to be taken outside in the night. They are still apt to micturate indoors wherever they may happen to be. Tallensi do not inculcate clean habits by direct training or by punishing faults in a child. A child acquires cleanliness by a gradual process of habituation[1] and social maturation as its general self-control, its powers of locomotion and of speech, and its identifications with adults grow. But if a small child, already accustomed to run outside, has an accident indoors, it is likely to be rebuked by one of the adults, most probably its mother or an older sibling.

It is also the mother who stands for the most serious deprivation the child experiences up to the age of weaning, the loss of the breast. There is nothing in their folk-lore or customs suggesting that the Tallensi have anything but the most matter-of-fact attitude towards the female breast. I have seen a man, with that utter lack of squeamishness characteristic of most Tallensi, when treating his brother's wife for inability to nurse her baby, himself suck at her breast in order to test the flow of milk. But there is a custom which hints that the mother's breast is felt to be a special symbol of motherhood. If a woman is very grievously affronted by her grown-up son or daughter, and she takes hold of her breast and says, 'I suffered to bear you and this is how you treat me

[1] Described in my *Social and Psychological Aspects of Education in Taleland* as a response to the expectation of normal behaviour.

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593 (*Man daa nye fara dɔɣi ki ɛŋəm la ŋwala*)', this is a curse of the most
789 terrible kind. For that reason, no doubt, none of my informants could
826 quote an instance of a mother actually putting this curse on a child. The symbolism is of interest, however, in view of the stress Tallensi lay on the mother as food-giver in their conventional picture of her.

Childhood

857 The next three or four years of a child's life are probably its freest and
593 happiest. Its energies are spent in play or in roaming around the immediate neighbourhood of the homestead in the company of slightly older siblings and classificatory siblings. But children of this age delight in being with their parents too. They will hang around their mother in the kitchen and trot around or sit with their father when he is resting under the shade tree. They see and hear everything that is going on in the house and are tolerated at all domestic occasions. In this way, and through their mimetic play, they build up the rudimentary schemas[1] of ideas, manual dexterities, and sentiments out of which grow the skills, interests, and values of later life. Love and indulgence is still the keynote of their parents' and other close relatives' attitude to them. Tallensi say that small children at this stage are still more attached to their mother than to their father because it is she who feeds them. In fact, as we have already mentioned, throughout a Taləŋ's life he thinks of his mother as the one who gave him food without stint, going hungry herself, if need be, so that her child might be fed.

857 By the age of 7 or 8 the child's world is becoming much more complex;
868 and the shadow of discipline and authority is creeping over it. Until it reaches the threshold of adolescence, at about 12 to 14 years of age, it still remains free to play for much of its time. But from the age of 7 or
593 so boys and girls are eager to participate in the adult routine of life and they become more and more involved in it. They begin by being given the simplest economic and household tasks such as scaring the birds from the fields of ripening grain, tethering the goats, rounding up the poultry—tasks which children of both sexes perform—or sweeping the house, carrying a tiny pot of water, gathering edible fungi or herbs for the pot, which girls only do. A very common task of both girls and boys at this stage is acting nursemaid to a baby. As this shows, there is very little social differentiation between them as yet.

857 By the age of about 9 or 10 children begin to adopt the sexual division
593 of labour customary among the Tallensi, and with it the corresponding division of social roles and ideals. Boys start following their older
462 brothers and take their turn at herding their father's cattle if he has any.
868 They are becoming more skilful with the hoe and by the age of about 12 reach a high degree of proficiency. A 12-year-old boy helps his mother

[1] Cf. the discussion of this concept in my Memorandum just cited.

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These affective divergencies spring from the different social relations of father and son on the one hand, and father and daughter on the other. Though a woman's ties with her paternal family are never severed, a man's jural responsibilities for his daughter cease with her marriage. He never loses the moral and religious authority of a father, however, or the corresponding ritual responsibilities for her. His curse is as potent as ever. The shrine of her spirit guardian is in his keeping and he sacrifices to it on her behalf when her husband requests him to do so. His chief ritual responsibility arises if she is persecuted by an evil Predestiny (*Yinbe'er*). It is his duty to have the rites of exorcism performed so that she can bear children and fulfil satisfactorily her role as a wife. He is obliged to send ceremonial gifts to the funeral if she or his son-in-law dies; and he must 'fetch her funeral home (*die koor*)' and carry out the rites that bring her spirit back to her ancestral fold when she is dead. He has a very definite social and personal interest in her children too. When a woman bears her first child her husband must send immediately to tell her parents and they demonstrate their continued affection and concern for her and her children by sending her gifts of food and other necessaries as generous as their means allow. A poor man might send only a basket of unthreshed guinea corn or millet and a couple of guinea-fowls, while his wife sends some shea butter, vegetables, and firewood. A rich chief I knew, when his first-born daughter had her first baby sent a procession of his younger wives bearing an assortment of gifts, including a 25-lb. bag of salt, several baskets of grain, a sheep, six guinea-fowls, and various luxury articles. Throughout her life a woman has a right to substantial gifts of grain from her father's house at harvest time, and to a home if she is left homeless. Women make a special point of collecting these gifts of grain at harvest time whether they are in want or not. As Tanzoo, the wife of a well-to-do man with enough grain and to spare, said when she received a large basket of early millet from her brother, 'I should feel ashamed not to fetch this grain. My co-wives would scoff saying I have no brother, no father.' Thus it is a source of pride, a test of family solidarity and, most important, a recurrent demonstration of a right to share in the products of the patrimonial estate which they might have owned if they had been born men.[1] These duties that a man has towards his daughter are the nucleus of his relations with her children. They are socially prescribed and fall upon his heirs when he dies.

From Adolescence to Adulthood

Let us return to the relations of father and son during this phase of the latter's growth and study it more closely. The son is a member of

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, p. 178.

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593 578 If a person is ill tempered or unnecessarily sharp with him, or appears to dislike him, a Talaŋ retorts with 'Why do you dislike me? Am I your *nyeer*, or what? (*I yaagəm bo? Man a i nyeer bɛ?*)' This formula is always spoken half-mockingly; for the rivalry of successive children, though assumed to be in the very nature of their relationship, is not taken too seriously. It is not, like the underlying rivalry of father and first-born son, subject to ritual sanctions. It is simply an acute expression of the familiarity and equality of siblings and does not destroy their solidarity.[1] Tallensi themselves say that successive siblings often get on together admirably and stand together as staunchly as any other full siblings. I have never heard it said that *soog* brothers are quicker to set up separate households if they are successive siblings than if they are not.

578 593 595 Tale custom recognizes the rivalry of successive siblings in a number of other ways. Thus successive siblings (this applies chiefly to brothers) may not be buried in the same grave. If they are, their spirits will be continually quarrelling and persecuting their descendants until they are exhumed and separated. Again, successive sisters may not be married to the same man or even to the same clan. But this rule is, to my own knowledge, often broken. If they do happen to be married into the same clan the sisters must avoid being pregnant at the same time or, if they are, they must not see each other during their pregnancy. If they do one or both will miscarry. Here it is belief rather than practice that is a sign of the rivalry of successive siblings. Tallensi object to having two sisters married to the same man for prudential reasons. They say that it is obviously more difficult to get eight cows out of one man in payment of bride-price than it is to get four cows. Nevertheless it does sometimes occur. A well-to-do son-in-law who has his father-in-law's esteem can often persuade the old man to give him another daughter to wife. If the girls are successive siblings, a very simple magical rite involving the burying of a hoe at the entrance of the husband's homestead serves to 'cut' their *nyeer* relationship.[2]

[789]

[1] I do not know whether successive siblings quarrel more often than non-successive siblings. Tallensi say they do. Knowing the Tallensi, I have no doubt that conventional expectation itself acts as a stimulus to petty wrangling between successive siblings. Every time they have a disagreement not only onlookers but they themselves put the conventional interpretation on the situation, and this is bound to make them more touchy in relation to each other than to other siblings. In every aspect of Tale social life cultural definitions and expectations direct behaviour in this way. On the other hand, I knew several pairs of successive siblings who got on extremely well together and to all appearances never said a cross word to each other. Tallensi admit that this is quite common and explain it by the invariable stock phrase 'It 's all a matter of character'.

828 [2] A question that immediately suggests itself is, whence does the rivalry of successive siblings arise? I have put this question to many Tallensi. The usual answer is in terms of the cliché that 'it is in the nature of things (*de yɛl nla*)'.

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had two little daughters, aged about 3, by different wives. One day the two children appeared very proudly each wearing a strip of cotton print about the waist. Omara explained that he had bought them these 'skirts', which had to be exactly the same in size and pattern. Had they been different in colour or size, or had he bought the children different presents, they would have been very upset and their mothers angry. He would have been accused of discriminating between them.

As this instance suggests, the closer children are in age or parentage or both the more should they be treated alike. The limiting case is that of twins and this deserves a special note. Twins (*leeba*)[1] are not greeted with joy among the Tallensi; but they are not destroyed; nor are they regarded as sacred in any circumstances; nor is the mother subject to moral censure or ritual penalties. But no woman desires to bear twins. One of the most efficacious medicines that can be placed in a ground-nut plot or among *ma'ana* (*Hibiscus esculentus*), *bɛt* (*H. sabdariffa*), or *bɛris* (*H. cannabinus*) plants—all of which supply favourite ingredients for sauces[2]—to prevent women from pilfering these crops is the medicine of twins (*leeba teem*) used in purifying the parents of twins. Anyone who defies this charm will have twins, it is said. I have seen women run on catching sight unexpectedly of a twin medicine charm dangling in a farm.

Tallensi believe that twins may not be 'human (*ninvoo*)'—i.e. complete social beings—at birth. As soon as they are born, a man who owns twin medicine is asked for medicine to mark their sleeping-place. If one or both die shortly after birth that is proof positive that he or they are *kɔlkpaaris*, malicious bush sprites, not human beings. They are then buried ignominiously in a special uninhabited place. A twin that survives the first month or so of life is tacitly assumed to be human and treated as an ordinary child. But if it dies in early infancy it may still prove to have been a *kɔlkpaarəg*, when the cause of its death is sought by divination. Its death will cause great distress to its parents, for it will have been treated with as much affection and devotion as a normal child, but it will not receive normal burial. Only when it reaches the age of about 4 [i.e. is old enough to have a following sibling (*nyeer*)] and is placed under the spiritual guardianship of an ancestor spirit, is a twin definitely regarded as a complete social being.

Tallensi seem to expect, as a matter of course, that at least one of a pair of twins will die in very early infancy.[3] The survivor then has to be

[1] They are always named *Yin* (Heaven) for the older and *Zuur* (tail) for the younger—*Yin*, 'because he sees the light of day first'; *Zuur* 'because he comes last'.

[2] *Vide* previously cited paper 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', by M. and S. L. Fortes.

[3] I can state with absolute certainty that every effort is made to keep twins alive. But the natives assert that the sheer physical strain of nursing and caring for twins is too much for most women. This is highly probable considering that

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602 Puɛŋyii's inner lineage as his distant 'mother's brother's lineage'. On the other hand, the Golibdaana can make the same claim in regard to Puɛŋyii by identifying himself with his 'sister', Puɛŋyii's mother. In the ordinary intercourse of daily life it is immaterial which relationship is stressed. The blanket concept of kinship (*dɔŋam*) covers all. But in special ritual situations a specific relationship emerges as the decisive one. For example, if the head of Puɛŋyii's inner lineage were to die, the Golibdaana might, if he were on good terms with the deceased, as a gesture of respect, send a gift of millet flour and a fowl as a contribution to the funeral, on the grounds that he is a 'sister's son' of the lineage.

Many instances could be quoted of people discovering hitherto unknown extra-clan kin by chance, as it is a common occurrence. It was on a chance visit to Tɛnzugu that Kuŋaanba learnt that Nyaaŋzum was the head of his father's mother's brother's inner lineage. Since then Kuŋaanba has become a regular visitor to and a great personal friend of Nyaaŋzum's family. In the same way it happens that people get married and discover later that they are kin. Tallensi say this probably happens very often but seldom becomes known. It is only if the couple lose several children one after another that it comes out. A diviner then reveals it as the cause of their misfortunes. Thus apprised of it, they consult the elders of their lineages and try to 'trace out (*tumh*)' their kinship. Whether they are successful or not—and they usually are—they then perform the rite of splitting kinship (*bɔk dɔŋam*), and this makes it permissible for their marriage to continue. It happened thus with Pukiehɔt, and this was one of the reasons why his in-laws were so angry with him for not paying his wife's bride-price. It was bad enough, they complained, that their daughter's marriage should be a breach of kinship; but, on top of that, here was her husband for ever hedging over the payment of the bride-price.

● [789]

The natives know very well that they have closer and more numerous matrilateral and sororal kinsfolk among adjacent clans than among more distant clans. We have seen (Ch. II) how they visualize this situation for uterine kin (*saarɔt*). They tend to think of their close matrilateral kin as being spatially near and their more remote extra-clan kin as being far away geographically as well. But they do not, of course, realize that all the extra-clan kinship ties of a lineage or clan, taken together, fall into a regular and definite socio-spatial order. They think of these relationships from the individual angle always. At the same time they are very conscious of the mutual reaction on one another of the clanship and lineage structure and these extra-clan kinship ties. Thus Tongo people say that it is much more satisfactory to have one's mother's brother at Zubiuŋ or Zoo than at Ba'ari or Wakii. The local and political cohesion of Zubiuŋ and Zoo with Tongo make it easier to keep in touch with one's mother"s brother, make one readier to accept and be accepted

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home, where in the meantime the other members, both men and women, of the new segment and the 'sisters' sons' and 'grandsons' of the segment who have been able to come have gathered. The head of the new segment arrives, followed, as the Tallensi think, by the spirits of his grandmother's ancestors. He now performs the sacrifices by which the new *bɔyar* is consecrated. He himself offers a sheep. All the other male members of the new segment bring a fowl each to be sacrificed on their behalf and *ahɔs* and *yaas* all do so too. A large pot or earthenware dish, inside which the small pot containing the sediment 'scooped' from the grandmother's lineage *bɔyar* pot is placed, forms the altar. Henceforth this will be the *bɔyar* of the new lineage segment; and there will be a similar communion rite embracing all the descendants of the founding ancestor and his mother whenever the *bɔyar* is inherited by a new lineage head.[1]

We have now considered the most important ritual services matrilateral kin render to their sororal kin. The ritual services rendered by sororal kin to matrilateral kin are, as might be expected, of far less consequence. In funeral ceremonies, for example, there are a number of rites in which it is necessary to have the participation of an *ahɔŋ* of the deceased. The rite of cooking 'the porridge of sisters-in-law (*pɔyakiis sayabo*)', which has been previously mentioned, is typical of these rites; and it is typical of them, also, that anybody who can, by any stretch of the term, be described as *ahɔŋ* can serve in them. All these rites express the fact that a person's death is of concern to his or her sororal kin as well as to his or her patrilineal kin, and affects the field of social relations of the former as well as that of the latter. Hence in all funeral rites a special portion of the meat, cooked food, and beer used is allocated to the 'sisters' children', whether few or many are present. Matrilateral and sororal kin do not, however, undergo mourning rites.

Apart from funerals, there are one or two other special ceremonies in which the services of an *ahɔŋ* are needed. Thus in the ceremony of exorcising an evil Predestiny (*Yinbe'er*) an *ahɔŋ* is required to perform the final act of sympathetic magic. This consists in collecting the magical paraphernalia used in the ceremony—all of which symbolize the wish that the evil Predestiny may depart and conceal itself for ever—and throwing them away in some barren spot. A 'sister's son' is called upon

[1] There is a point of religious doctrine that cannot be fully discussed here but must be mentioned to avoid confusion. Every important ancestor shrine is a means of making a whole line of ancestors accessible to its possessor. Now the collective mystical power of a patrilineal line of ancestors reposes in the lineage *bɔyar*. Hence every important shrine has to be linked up with the lineage *bɔyar* of the dominant spirit to which it is consecrated. That is why when a *bakologo* is set up, the *bɔyar* of the matrilateral lineage from which it is derived is 'scooped' for inclusion in the new shrine. Broadly speaking, the ritual validity of every ancestor shrine goes back to a *bɔyar*. But the setting up of a new lineage *bɔyar* is a very special ritual landmark.

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602 789 to do this service because, as a kinsman of the sufferer, he naturally wishes to see him free of his evil fate. He is held to desire this the more strongly because his *ahəb* sacrifices on his behalf. Hence his welfare depends on the continued life and the perpetuation of the lineage of the *ahəb*, both of which are threatened by the evil Predestiny. Lastly, he is specially suitable because a complete stranger might use the opportunity to do the sufferer magical harm, while a patrilineal kinsman of his might be contaminated by the evil Predestiny. Again, anybody who can be identified as an *ahəŋ*, in however remote a classificatory sense, may be asked to perform this service.

The Father's Sister

604 We have left the discussion of the relationship of father's sister (*ba-pɔk*) and brother's child (*bii*) for this chapter, although it is not a relationship of extra-clan kinship. Father's sister and brother's child are members of the same clan and lineage. But Tallensi associate the father's sister with relatives outside the clan. This is due to her marrying out of the clan, to her having no significant public voice in the affairs of the lineage, [428] and to her being unable to inherit lineage property or ancestor shrines.[1] Thus a native usually compares his relationship with his father's sister to his relationship with his mother's brother, not to his relationship with his parents. It is thought of more as the opposite of the relationship between sister's son and mother's brother than as an item in the scheme of intra-familial or intra-lineage relationships.

As in the case of mother's brother and sister's child, the bond between father's sister and brother's child tends to be more effective for brother's sons than for brother's daughters. In the case of the brother's sons it is reinforced by the ties a woman has with her paternal lineage and by the ties her children have with their mother's brother and his sons. In the case of brother's daughters, it is attenuated because the daughters tend to be dispersed by marriage and their relationship with their father's sister is much more a purely personal affair.

Compared with the mother's brother, the father's sister (*ba-pɔk*) counts for little in the web of extra-clan kinship. Tallensi say this is because she is a woman. 'It is not she who sacrifices for you but you (her brother's son) may one day sacrifice on her behalf.' At the same time they declare that 'she is your father'. I have several times had an old woman introduced to me by a man or a woman as 'my father'. Eŋwala, explaining her affection for her full brother's son, Anaaho, said in the stock phraseology, 'Is he not my child? If you and your brother together have a child, is he not also your child [as much as your brother's]?

[1] Except, as has been mentioned before if she is the last surviving member of the lineage. Even then she does not inherit the ancestor shrines but merely sacrifices to them, as if she were acting on behalf of her deceased father. She can never inherit lineage land.

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(*Pa m-biiga? Nyɛn ni i tau n-kab dɔya bii, pa nyɛnmi biig n-a u?*)'. As will be remembered, men quote the same maxim when they are asked why mother's brother and sister's son are generally so attached to each other. In support of this Tallensi usually quote two customs. Firstly, when an old woman dies, the oldest of her brothers' sons has his head shaved in mourning, as if for his father. He represents all his siblings, Tallensi say, in this act of filial respect. Secondly, a *ba-pɔk* has the power of pronouncing a curse against a child of her brother. She can, conversely, withdraw a curse pronounced by her brother if he dies without having done so, and if he has no surviving brother of the same nuclear lineage. But the social equivalence of a woman with her brother in relation to his children is limited by her sex. She is barred from exercising the jural and ritual authority and the rights of a father. In fact, the tendency is for her to look up to her brother's son as the future heir of her brother and the potential repository of authority in the affairs of her lineage.

Two examples will suffice to show how limited in fact are the jural rights a woman has in relation to her brother's children. They have principally a token value. When a funeral is being celebrated by a woman's husband's nuclear lineage her close lineage kin send a party of mourners to bear their condolences to the lineage of their lineage-in-laws. The party includes a number of young girls whom the woman calls her sisters and daughters. Before they leave again for home these young girls are gathered together and surrounded by a crowd of young men of the host clan. Amid laughter and good-humoured teasing the girls are invited to choose a 'future husband' each from among the young men. It is all a game, part of the hospitality accorded to the visitors. The selected 'husband' has to give a parting gift to the girl who has chosen him, so that she shall go home pleased with her visit. Among these girls might be a daughter of one of the woman's brothers of the same nuclear lineage. If the woman is particularly interested in the young man this girl selects, she may declare publicly that she is giving him the girl as his wife. Everybody pretends to accept this declaration as if it came from the girl's father, but in fact everybody knows that it has only a token significance and no jural force whatever.

Again, if a woman deserts a husband to whom she has been given by her father without having previously arranged to go to another man, she very often takes refuge with a *ba-pɔk*. There she is, so to speak, under a parent's protection but not subject to her father's authority. She knows that her *ba-pɔk* will sympathize with her and cannot in any case force her to return to the man she has left. Her father, satisfied that she is in parental care, will not seek to put pressure on her, at least for some time. However, a girl in this position soon attracts suitors, though courtship has to be clandestine, for she is still formally the wife of another man. But sometimes a suitor succeeds in ingratiating himself with the *ba-pɔk* and persuades her to connive at an elopement, a thing

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604 which a father would never do. In theory, this means that the *ba-pɔk*
586 consents to the new marriage. In practice, her action has no binding
587 force on her brother. This rule applies also to an unmarried girl who is given in marriage by her *ba-pɔk*. A woman might have one of her brother's daughters living with her as a nursemaid for her baby. She might promise the girl as a wife to one of her husband's brothers. But her brother need not consider himself bound by this promise if he has objections to the marriage.

604 A father's sister is, in short, a kind of female 'father', but without the
577 jural and ritual attributes of fatherhood. A father's sister must be treated with respect. It would be grossly improper, for example, to joke with her as one jokes with a wife's sister; and to strike or abuse her, even if she were much younger than oneself, would be a sin. But the respect accorded to her is only a pale reflection of the attitude implicit in filial piety. It is much more a matter of etiquette than of emotion, as if it were merely conventional and not evoked by a feeling of moral obligation.

604 A marked characteristic of a person's relations with his or her father's sister is the absence of specific mutual obligations. Just as a *ba-pɔk* has in reality no rights over her brother's children, so she has no specific duties of either a ritual or a secular kind towards them, or they to her. This is the chief contrast between this relationship and that of parent and child or that of mother's brother and sister's child. Only a shadow of a ritual sanction comes into the relationship, in the form of the belief that the curse of a *ba-pɔk* can harm her brother's child, and in the notion that she stands under the protection of the same ancestors as the latter. Hence, though she cannot demand services from her brother's child, it is felt that a request for help from her should be met, even at the cost of some inconvenience. If a person offends his father's sister and she [789] reproaches him saying, 'I bore you (identifying herself with her brother) and this is how you treat me. My ancestors have seen it, my fathers have seen it (*Man dɔyi la k-i tyɔm là ɣwala; n-yaanam nyeya, m-banam nyeya*)', this has the force of a curse because she is invoking her ancestors who are also his ancestors. Such a curse would disturb a native, but not nearly so deeply as a father's curse or if a mother's brother refused to sacrifice on his behalf.

Because their relationship is devoid of a definite jural coefficient and is not subject to organized ritual sanctions; because, also, a father's sister stands outside the scheme of economic and domestic associations in which the relationship of parent and child is set, the relations of father's sister and brother's child are free of the undercurrent of tension found in those of father and child. A woman's bonds with her brother's children are fundamentally bonds of sentiment. That is why they seldom endure beyond one generation, or extend beyond the nuclear lineage.

The personal relations of father's sister and brother's child have much

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Whenever they build miniature houses, during the building season, 857
' shrines ' are added and, as in real life, each has his own. 524

Play with these shrines is woven into other play activities, and it 869
revolves around sacrifice. When a small boy goes out hunting for fieldmice or birds, if he happens to have a ' shrine ' he will ' give it water ', i.e. pour a libation to it. Ashes represent flour, which is stirred up in water as in a real sacrifice. He invokes the shrine, ' My father ' (but never mentioning names as in real sacrifice since his own father is probably still alive), ' accept this water and grant that I have successful hunting. If I kill an animal, I will give you a dog.' Some time later he may catch a live mouse, and when he has played with it to satiety he ' sacrifices ' it on his shrine—this is the promised ' dog '. A nestling bird found alive is ' sacrificed ' as a ' fowl ' or ' guinea-fowl '. If he finds a live mouse or bird by chance it will always be taken home and ' sacrificed ' thus before it is cut up and eaten. Taboos like those of adults are invented for his shrines. Fetishes, like those of adults, accept only red and black ' fowls '; other shrines only white ones. Siikaəni, a small boy of about 7 or 8, built him- [778
self a *loo* fetish, which can be dispatched to ' tie up ' any one 789]
who might interfere with one's enterprises. Siikaəni pretended to use his *loo* to keep the parents of his ' sweetheart ' out of the way when he went to see her—a frequent use of a real *loo* by young men.

Of the imaginative and constructive play produced as a response 857
to current social activities in which children co-operate, I shall 524
instance only building. During the building season a favourite pre- 868
occupation of the children is to build miniature rooms or houses. It is a co-operative group enterprise, boys and girls frequently working together, led by a boy of about 12–13. It is carried on in the intervals between helping the men. Sometimes they are content to build only walls, a few inches high, but when the leader is keen they undertake a complete replica of a house—walls a foot or more high, several rooms properly arranged, a roof, a beaten inner court, and shrines. The work goes on for days on end and needs planning and organization. The girls and smaller boys make the swish and roll it into pellets, the older boys do the actual building, often with extraordinary skill. When the ' house' is built and roofed and the walls have dried, if the

6: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1937 FE11 Tallensi FE11

by dry stretches of sand remains. The river during the rains is simply known as *mɔyar*, "river"; but each pool has a name extended to the corresponding division of the river banks on both sides.

The end of the dry season and the commencement of the agricultural season receives social affirmation in a great ritual festival the *Gɔlib*, celebrated by one group of Tallensi clans. The series of rites and ceremonies includes a communal and ritual fishing of a pool *Gɔlimbiuŋ*, dedicated to *Gɔlib* (not in the Volta). The fishing itself is a ritual performance in which the size of the catch counts for very little. But this inaugurates the season of the utilitarian fishing expeditions, none of which may precede the fishing of *Gɔlimbiuŋ*. The magical intention of *Gɔlib* is to ensure the fertility of crops, women, and livestock, success in all food-getting enterprises, security from danger, disease and death. Fishing is frequently mentioned in the exhortations addressed to the ancestor spirits during the *Gɔlib* rites. The *Gɔlib*, however, is more in the nature of a general blessing than of specifically efficacious magic.

Some ten to fourteen days after the close of *Gɔlib* the first of the communal fishing expeditions takes place. Every owner decides for himself the day on which he wishes to fish his pool. Thus it often happens that two or more fishing expeditions to different parts of the Volta occur on the same day. During the month I recorded the occurrence of ten expeditions; but as many more certainly escaped my notice. I accompanied three of these expeditions.

An impending fishing expedition is announced through the two main channels customary for the publication of such events. A day or two in advance, after darkness falls, the owner causes it to be cried (*tuol*) from the house-tops of his settlement. The news subsequently spreads throughout the country, from mouth to mouth. But alternatively or in addition, he employs an even more effective means of publicity, the market. Members of his family and neighbours are sent on market day to inform the friends and acquaintances they meet. Soon it is known to every person in the market, to which people throng from every quarter of the Tallensi and neighbouring tribal areas.

A message may also be sent to the *Tɔŋraana*, the chief of highest rank in the Tallensi country; but this is an act of deference not a political obligation, and is observed principally by the minor chiefs who have a clan relationship with Tongo. So also the chief of Kurugu, Paramount Chief of the division, is usually apprised.

So much for the economic, seasonal and public context of fishing. On the appointed day ceaseless processions of men, women, adolescent boys and girls, and even children of 9 and 10 years, converge upon the selected pool. Some of them come from eight or nine miles away by winding paths through low but rough and sparsely inhabited bush. The men and boys carry bows and arrows, spears and axes, as well as their fishing nets, partly as a precaution against meeting with a hyena or leopard or some game, partly out of habit. The women, balancing their fishing baskets on the head, set out with the men. But as the procession swells they tend to drop behind to join their fellows, and come along

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About noon, the owner of the pool arrives, usually quite unceremonially, followed by kinsmen and kinswomen. The owner of the first pool to be fished in 1934 was a minor chief of the *Namoos* group, the *Bolgraana*, who had only recently been installed. To mark this, his first fishing expedition, he arrived escorted by musicians and in the full splendour of his red cap, the prime badge of his rank, and a gaudy gown. The musicians at once became the centre of an eager crowd which soon disposed itself in a dance, while the chief proceeded to his seat under a tree near the bank, the traditional place "where my ancestors (former chiefs) used to sit," he explained. The owner of a pool always registers his claims, in the first instance, by thus taking up his traditional seat, though he need not remain there once the fishing commences.

The multitude is now all keyed up, ready for the plunge. People begin to move about, a tumult of conversation rises from the far side of the river, showing how intense is the anticipatory excitement. As yet not a single person has dared to enter the pool, except at its very fringe to get a drink of water. But the most important preparatory activity is still to come—the magic. The owner is discussing this and other matters with half a dozen elders and men of rank, kinsmen and clansmen from several *Namoos* settlements, or, if he belongs to the *Tallis* group, from *Tallis* settlements. The groups never mix in this sort of situation, in which political, legal, and ritual prerogatives are canvassed. Nevertheless the discussion is not private, nor is its subject matter stereotyped. But its purpose is clear: to affirm the owner's rights. The nature and basis of these rights were formulated explicitly and with vigour in one such discussion: So and so, the chief, owns this pool. His ancestors held the chieftainship before him and owned the pool; he was invested by the Paramount Chief according to the prescribed and traditionally ordained procedure; therefore he owns the pool, as his ancestors did before him, and is consequently entitled to the traditionally fixed tribute, the first fish of respectable size which anyone catches. Nobody must cheat or fight about a fish, as was done in the previous expedition. All this is repeated over and over in rhetorical monologue by each member of the *extempore* council. It is, of course, perfectly well known to everybody, and, what is more curious, the speakers seem to address themselves entirely to their own circle, some of whom will not even enter the water, and all of whom will receive a share of the chief's tribute if the catch is a good one. The purpose of the discussion is apparently not publicity but psychological—assuring the owner that his rights are acknowledged, encouraging him, demonstrating to him that the most respected citizens are on his side and on the side of the traditional guarantees of property rights.

Now comes the crucial act of the series leading up to the actual fishing, the performance of the magical rites. The officiant has been waiting for the owner's word to start at the appointed, traditionally hallowed place, on the bank or by the waterside, surrounded by a number of men and boys of his own lineage, all descendants of the ancestor who originally acquired the magic. There are a number of typical features—

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226 789 782 [778] typical both of the particular magic and of all Tallensi magico-religious rites—but also many variations in the rites, the apparatus, and the personnel, from instance to instance. Morphologically, the essential and recurrent constituents of every magical rite are the apparatus (*bayar*), the medicine (*tiim*), the sacrifice (*kaab*, vb.), and the invocation (*ka*). The fetish mobilised in this situation is a *Ba'ar*, which may be translated as *Clamp*. Its material vehicle (the *bayar*) usually comprises a medicine pot, a tree stump, and a large stone, at the owner's house, together with some portable objects such as a cow's tail and an axe shaft encased in crocodile skin and greasy with the blood of sacrifices and anointings of medicine. These are brought along to the river and have obvious symbolic reference to the notion of the *Ba'ar* as holding down or inhibiting dangerous creatures and men, just as an axe-head is tightly clamped on to the shaft.[1] The magical performance *in situ* is the culmination of a series of magical and religious rites commenced earlier in the day or even on the previous day at the houses of the owner of the pool and of the magical specialist. A day or two in advance, the owner of the pool, assisted [787] by elders of his family, consults a diviner to discover what sacrifices to make to his ancestor spirits in order that nothing untoward should spoil the fishing. He will learn also what animals to provide for the sacrifices to be made by the magical specialist. Usually it will be a number of chickens. In the special circumstances of the *Bolgraana's* first fishing expedition he had to give a goat to be sacrificed by the owner of the fetish. The latter sacrifices at his own compound where he prepares the medicines—roots, bark or twigs of several species of trees. The rest of the magical rites can be observed at the fishing pool. The rites are private, performed without the cognizance of, or any display of interest by, the multitude assembled for the fishing. Those who happen to be near [424] pay no attention, even when they are not asked to move off. This is characteristic of Tallensi magic, ownership of which is inviolable.

The officiant mixes some millet-flour in a calabashful of water scooped from the pool to be fished and begins to recite his invocation in a low and hortatory voice. He addresses the *bayar*, the material objects dedicated to the ancestor who originally possessed the magic. His invocation is not a fixed spell. He improvises according to his gifts and experience. But the theme and the manner of the invocation are stereotyped. He calls upon his male ancestors by name in ascendant order, stressing particularly the original owner of the magic by frequently calling his name in the course of his invocation. He explains the occasion, and half entreating half commanding, exhorts them to drive crocodiles and dangerous fish into their holes or out of the pool so that no one should be injured, to prevent fighting between the people about to enter the water, and to give them a good catch. There is much repetition in the invocation and the officiant is constantly prompted by his co-adjutors. Calling upon his ancestors to come and accept the sacrifice, he pours some of the flour water on to the *bayar* objects or directly into the

[1] Note the distinction: *bayar* is the generic term for every kind of sacred object: *Ba'ar* is the name of this particular fetish.

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pool, sips a little, and passes the rest to his co-adjutors. These, who are all members of his own paternal family, and may number as many as twenty men, have been treated with the medicine at home—they eat a little mixed with millet porridge, and smear a little over the solar plexus. Then he plants the axe shaft firmly by the water-side, thus symbolically pinioning all dangerous creatures and men and setting up the fetish in closest proximity to its scene of action.

Before anyone not magically protected can enter the water, however, the pool itself must be rendered safe. From a small gourd the officiant gives a little medicine to each of several of his younger co-adjutors. Taking the medicine in their mouths they wade into the pool in a line. Every few minutes they scoop a handful of water which they take in the mouth and squirt out, this way and that; and as they wade, or in the deeper parts swim, they cry out "emerge, emerge, vanish, vanish," to expel crocodiles and other dangerous fish. They traverse the whole pool, watched with close attention by the crowd of fishers, who begin to press forward restlessly. But if anyone dares to step into the water, he is immediately rebuked by the owner of the pool who stands on a high vantage point watching the progress of the boys in the water.

As the boys approach the bank, the suspense of the waiting multitude is at its highest. The owner must give the signal for the general descent into the pool; but he may suddenly burst into an harangue, reminding the people of his ancestral and chiefly rights of ownership, warning them against fighting, and threatening anyone who conceals his catch or otherwise cheats him of his legitimate tribute. Even kinsmen[1]—sisters' sons, brothers-in-law, and so forth—must not abuse the ties of kinship by hiding the fish they catch, he commands.

Then he gives the signal. "Descend," he calls out and the men pressing round him surge into the water with a shout which becomes an exhilarating wordless chant. On every side the chant is taken up and the men sweep into the pool holding their nets aloft. The chant soon subsides but is taken up every now and again in the course of the afternoon. Behind the men follow the women, more soberly and silently; the outermost circle consists of small boys and girls, more bent on play than on serious fishing. The men press forward, in a solid but irregular mass. The bolder spirits, who are able to swim, venture into the deepest parts. The boys who went in to spray the pool magically had been carefully watched, so that everyone knows exactly how far he can go with safety. Indeed in one pool the precaution was taken of sending four good swimmers in to test the depth before the magical rites were performed.

[1] The Tallensi are patrilineal—patrilocal, but cognatic relationship is conspicuously recognised. Members of the owner's joint-family and lineage, who will eventually receive a share of the tribute (see below), have no motive to hide their catch. Clansmen are bound by the rules of ownership of the pool like any stranger but the owner's kindred and affines trade on their personal relationship to him to get away with their catch.

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The modal factor in the situation is the magic. On one of the expeditions I attended the owner had his own fishing magic and made the sacrifices himself; but I do not know how general this is. Otherwise, the magician's office has its traditional warranty. It is an ancient privilege and even duty of his lineage to perform the rites for the lineage of the particular holder of the chieftainship. The association, like every relationship of this sort, is accounted for on the grounds of ancestral kinship. Thus a community of interest, such as could never arise in a purely commercial relationship, is presupposed. Functionally, whether the owner or the magician are united in one personage or not, magic enters into the fishing configuration as the owner's principal instrument of organization, helping to assert his status and rights in the fishing situation. This inference receives confirmation from the following observations: If a chief owns several pools, once the complete series of rites have been performed at the first pool to be fished, it is sufficient, subsequently, if the riverside rites alone are performed. Again, if, as sometimes happens, two adjacent pools are fished on the same day, the second will not be entered until it has been sprayed and the signal given. Thus the final and public rite, the actual organizing act, is emphasized. But the clinching evidence for this is the fact that the magical act proclaims the owner's responsibility for the satisfactory outcome of the expedition which he has organized. The behaviour of the people, more so, the ideology associated with situations of this type (full documentation of which must await later publication) and the purpose expressed in the magic prove this. Magic is, therefore, the binding factor in the fishing configuration, linking together the principal constituents—the objective facts of place and economic purpose, the owner, the people who come to fish and the relevant ideological principles.

The magic is able to achieve this in virtue of its content; that is, the control it ostensibly exercises over the psychologically critical factor in the situation, the dangers which might be encountered in the water. It is towards these dangers that the magic is *prima facie* directed. Its efficacy is never questioned; for even if, as sometimes happens, someone should be injured by a crocodile or fish, the ready explanation lies to hand that he has offended an ancestor spirit who took this occasion to punish him. An injury to an individual is his own affair. Nevertheless, nobody carries out private magic for his own protection. Again, fear of injury is not a deterrent to poaching either by individuals or, as in the case of the Yinduri expedition, by a group.[1]

It is obvious, therefore, that the magic is valid only within the context of the organized fishing expedition, promoted by the rightful owner. The psychological facts upon which the magic is built have relevance only within this context. The real danger, or the correlative fear of injury, does not precipitate a magical rite whenever an individual or group is liable to it, but only within the appropriate social situation.

[1] Indeed fishing expeditions are sometimes made to distant unowned pools and then no magic is performed, as I discovered during my second field trip in 1936. This is because these expeditions are informal, not organized by a responsible personage, and comparable to poaching.

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226 789 There the psychological facts are, one might say, re-created, socially transformed by the magic into a collective risk against which protection is provided by the very act which affirms its existence. The magic is concerned not with the safety of individuals but with the security of the group. Above all, responsiblity for the security of the group rests, in the last resort, upon the owner of the pool, the one who brings the group into being. Through the magic this responsibility is affirmed as a privilege associated with the ownership rather than a burden. Individual magical precautions would be as incongruous with this communal situation as a particular individual's chances of injury are unpredictable. In brief, the magical organization of the situation depends upon the exploitation of psychological factors latent in it; but these psychological factors cannot be regarded as the source of the magic. Ownership, magic, and organization of the expedition constitute a unitary structure the disruption of which would entirely alter the significance of any of the constituents.

121 At the outset of this paper the view was expressed that every type of social situation exhibits a definite structure. An analysis was then made of a typical social situation met with among the Tallensi. Various institutions (chieftainship) techniques (magic) and norms of behaviour (disposal of the catch) each determined in part by a context lying beyond the boundaries of the fishing expedition, were shown to enter into the situation. It was suggested, also, that the fishing magic is the factor which binds the different components into a definite pattern. The question arises why is it that situations such as this exhibit a specific structure? Is it due to the peculiar ensemble of institutions, etc., represented? Is it due to the nuclear interest—*viz.*, the catching of fish—of the situation? Or is it due to the fact that what we differentiate as institutions, etc., appear in such situations, as the concrete responses of individuals and groups to one another in terms of social definitions and psychological impulses arising solely from the situation itself? This is a problem which requires the examination of many types of situations comprising similar combinations of institutions, techniques, and norms of behaviour.[1]

[114] [1] This paper was written after my first expedition to the field, in 1934-5, as a Fellow of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures.

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the prosperity of the land. Though it is housed in his compound, neither the Chief nor any of his clansmen may set eyes on it; only the Gbizug Tendaana and his lineage may. The Chief speaks of it with an awe which is almost terror. The balance is adjusted by the Chief's rainmaking powers. Only Namoos may own rain medicine, which was brought to Taleland by their ancestor. When drought is prolonged, all the Tendaanas, led by the Gbizug Tendaana, formally call upon and implore the Chief to see to it that rain falls. So great is his rainmaking power that rain will fall at once if he merely declares, in the name of his ancestors, that their wishes will be satisfied. Such, in fact, proved to be the case in 1934.

Again, this ritual polarity is paralleled in social and personal attitudes. The Chief and the Gbizug Tendaana, in private conversation, comment with a mixture of pride, scorn, and fear each upon his opposite number.

Among the most striking mechanisms of this equilibrium are the ritual festivals. The various settlements are always classified in terms of them, and the natives never tire of dilating enthusiastically upon them.

Ritual and dance are the two components of every festival; the former usually esoteric, the latter public though exclusive. During the rainy season, which lasts roughly from April to September, ritual and group activities are almost completely ousted by agriculture. In July-August the early millet is harvested, but the major crops, the guinea corn and late millet, still stand.[2] The Tallensi have a lunar calendar, and the last month of the rains is called the "Moon of Waters" (Kuom ŋmarig). An ethnologist cannot, alas, be in two places at the same time. I was living among the Namoos in September, 1934, and shall therefore describe the events of this and the next month from their point of view.

Weeks in advance the approaching festivals are the dominant theme of conversation for man, woman, and child. The ceremonial cycle is inaugurated by the Baari Tendaana, who ritually "throws away the water," i.e. abolishes the rains on the first day of the new month. This is announced by a burst of hallooing, which commences at Baari and sweeps across the country, the signal that the festivals have come round again.

That night the people of Baari begin their celebrations. At Tongo, on the next day, the youths and maidens are putting finishing touches to their festive costumes. On the fourth day of the moon a deputation of elders waits on the Chief, to remind him of his traditional obligation to summon a diviner on the following day.

[2] The calendrical incidence of the ritual festivals and their relation to the annual productive cycle are more fully set out in M. and S. L. Fortes, Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi (Africa, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1936).